Health Disciplines Board

Annual Report

JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 1986

Alberta

Alberta

Office of the Minister Responsible for
Professions and Occupations

420 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-3664

May 15, 1987

Dr. D. Carter
Speaker
Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Sir:

I have the honour to present the Annual Report of the Health Disciplines Board for the year January 1, 1986 to December 31, 1986.

Respectfully submitted,

Ian C. Reid
Minister Responsible for
Professions and Occupations

Alberta
PROFESSIONS AND
OCCUPATIONS BUREAU

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May 15, 1987

The Honourable Dr. Ian C. Reid
Minister Responsible for
Professions and Occupations

Sir:

I have the honour and privilege to present the Annual Report of the Health Disciplines Board for the year January 1, 1986 to December 31, 1986.

Respectfully submitted,

Elvin Christenson, F.C.A.
Chairman
Alberta Health Disciplines Board

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Introduction

Health Disciplines Act

The Health Disciplines Act, which came into force in 1981, is intended to provide a mechanism for regulating a variety of health disciplines that are not regulated under other legislation. The Health Disciplines Act provides for the establishment of a Health Disciplines Board and the procedures whereby disciplines may be regulated under this Act. In particular, the Act outlines the following:

(1) Procedures for conducting investigations to determine if a health discipline should be designated under the Act;

(2) Requirements for the registration of practitioners within designated health disciplines;

(3) Requirements for the handling of complaints respecting a registered practitioner's competence or fitness to practise;

(4) Provisions for the Health Disciplines Board to make regulations for designated health disciplines.

Amendments to the Health Disciplines Act

The Health Disciplines Amendment Act, 1986, was passed on September 19, 1986 and proclaimed in December of 1986. The principle changes produced by this amendment are outlined below:

(1) Section 4.01 permits the Minister to establish Advisory Committees to provide advice to the Health Disciplines Board in respect to

- investigations to determine whether a discipline should be regulated under this Act; and
- the development of regulations for disciplines designated under this Act.

The size and composition of an Advisory Committee is not defined in the legislation and would depend entirely upon the purpose for which it was established. It is important, therefore, to distinguish between these Advisory Committees and the Health Discipline Committees established to govern specific disciplines.

(2) Where a discipline is governed by a health discipline association, provision has been made to permit the health discipline association to establish honorary registers. Individuals who are registered only as honorary members would be permitted to use the title of the discipline but would not be permitted by this Act to provide health services.

(3) The appeal process, with respect to registration matters, was modified. Under the revised system, if the Board is requested to review the Committee's advice, with respect to a matter of registration or renewal of registration, the Board, on reviewing the advice, may either confirm the Committee's decision or refer the matter back to the Committee for further review. The Board may not overturn the Committee's advice.

If a Committee's decision with respect to a disciplinary matter is appealed, the Health Disciplines Board may, on reviewing the Committee's decision, confirm or reverse the Committee's decision or vary the decision of the Committee.

(4) The Schedule of Designated Health Disciplines was amended to designate psychiatric nurses and to change the title for respiratory technologists to respiratory therapists.

Administration of the Health Disciplines Act

The Minister Responsible for the administration of the Health Disciplines Act is the Honourable Dr. Ian C. Reid. Administrative support for the Act and the Health Disciplines Board is provided by the Professions and Occupations Bureau and is coordinated by the Registrar of Health Disciplines. In 1986, Mr. Dennis Gartner served as Registrar from January to July. He was then succeeded by Mr. Richard Butler.

Health Disciplines Board

Membership

The members of the Health Disciplines Board for the year 1986 were:

Chairman: Elvin Christenson, FCA, Edmonton
Deputy Chairman: Marlys Carruthers, Calgary
Members: William Donald, MD, Calgary
Calvin Fairbanks, MD, Calgary
Lucille Lisowski, Edmonton
Murray Ross, Edmonton
John Young, DDS, Edmonton
Anthony Koch, BA, LLB, Edmonton
Shane Porter, Lethbridge

Mr. Anthony Koch and Mr. Shane Porter were appointed to the Health Disciplines Board on July 26, 1986. The terms of office for William Donald, Lucille Lisowski and Marlys Carruthers ended on December 31, 1986.

Investigations of Health Disciplines

Requests for Investigations

In 1986, the Health Disciplines Board received four formal requests for investigations under the Health Disciplines Act. These requests were in respect of the disciplines of psychiatric nurses, health record administrators/technicians, orthopaedic technologists, and naturopathic practitioners.

(1) Health Record Administrators/Technicians

The request for this investigation was made by the Alberta Health Record Association on April 30, 1986. The Board will be seeking input from the groups and associations that have an interest in the discipline during 1987.

(2) Naturopathic Practitioners

On September 17, 1986, the Health Disciplines Board received a request from the Alberta Association of Naturopathic Practitioners to conduct an investigation to determine if this discipline should be designated under the Health Disciplines Act. It should be noted that in August of 1984, the Health Disciplines Board, on the request of the Minister Responsible for Professions and Occupations, had begun an investigation of this discipline. This investigation was suspended; however, in light of the request from the Alberta Association of Naturopathic Practitioners, it will be reactivated in 1987.

(3) Orthopaedic Technologists

The Alberta Chapter of the Canadian Society of Orthopaedic Technologists, in a letter dated September 16, 1986, requested that the Health Disciplines Board consider again the discipline of orthopaedic technologists.

The Board's first investigation of this discipline was begun in November of 1982 and completed in June of 1983. At that time, the Board determined that the services of orthopaedic technologists could be and in general were, provided by Nursing Assistants. The Board recommended that this discipline not be designated.

In response to the request for a re-investigation, the Health Disciplines Board informed the Alberta Chapter of the Canadian Society of Orthopaedic Technologists, that the Board would consider a re-investigation if the applicants were able to demonstrate to the Board's satisfaction that there had been a significant change in the discipline or other circumstances since the Board's initial investigation. The Board is awaiting further input in this matter.

Investigations Completed

In 1986, the Health Disciplines Board conducted the investigation of the discipline of psychiatric nurse.

The investigation was initiated by a request from the Psychiatric Nurses Association of Alberta in a letter dated January 20, 1986. In conducting this investigation, the Board consulted with various associations or organizations in Alberta that have an interest in the practice of this discipline. The Board contacted professional associations concerned with psychiatric and general nursing, physicians, employers, training institutions and government departments. The Board also contacted the provincial associations in the three other provinces that utilize psychiatric nurses: Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia.

In June of 1986, the Health Disciplines Board

considered all of the submissions in respect to this investigation and heard oral presentations from the three nursing disciplines that are currently in Alberta: Psychiatric Nurses Association of Alberta; Alberta Mental Deficiency Nurses Association; Alberta Association of Registered Nurses. After considering all of the written submissions and the oral submissions of these three groups, the Board determined that the degree of risk of harm to the public that may result from the practice of psychiatric nursing, is such that the discipline should be designated under the Health Disciplines Act. The Board, therefore, recommended to the Minister Responsible for Professions and Occupations, that legislation be enacted to designate the discipline of psychiatric nurse under the Health Disciplines Act.

Since psychiatric nurses are presently governed under the Psychiatric Nurses Training Act and the Psychiatric Nurses Association Act, the Board also recommended that these two Acts be repealed.

Under the Health Disciplines Act there are two options for governing a health discipline. A discipline may be governed by a Committee appointed by the Minister or it may be governed by a designated health discipline association. In the case of psychiatric nurses, the Board recommended to the Minister that psychiatric nurses be governed by an association, specifically, the Psychiatric Nurses Association of Alberta. The Board noted that this association had been responsible for the registration of psychiatric nurses under previous legislation and the association clearly wished to continue with this responsibility. In December of 1986, legislation was enacted to designate the discipline of psychiatric nurse under the Health Disciplines Act. When regulations under the Health Disciplines Act have been developed and approved for psychiatric nurses, the Psychiatric Nurses Association of Alberta will be designated to govern this discipline.

Investigations in Process

Investigations with respect to dental technicians, mental deficiency nurses, electroencephalograph technologists, athletic therapists, homeopaths, and chiropodists are in various stages of completion. Formal recommendations should be made with respect to the first three disciplines in 1987. The remaining three have yet to be formally considered by the Health Disciplines Board.

The Development of Regulations for Designated Health Disciplines

According to the Health Disciplines Act, the Health Disciplines Board is responsible for the development of regulations for designated health disciplines. In developing regulations, the Board relies very heavily upon health discipline committees or, in the case of disciplines governed by health discipline associations, the governing council of the association.

Registered Nursing Assistants

On September 25, 1986, regulations for nursing assistants were approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. These regulations were developed by the Health Disciplines Board in consultation with the Nursing Assistant Committee. In the process of developing these regulations, it was determined that nursing assistants should be governed by a designated health discipline association, the Professional Council for Registered Nursing Assistants.

When the regulations for nursing assistants come into force on January 1, 1987, the Professional Council will assume responsibility for the registration and discipline of nursing assistants. The establishment of the Professional Council was not without incident. In November, 1986, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and two locals of the Canadian Union of Public Employees brought a suit against the Professional Council, the Health Disciplines Board, the Province and the Minister Responsible for Professions and Occupations. This suit attempt to have the designation of this discipline and the designation of the Professional Council rescinded on the grounds that the Board had not followed the procedures required by the Health Disciplines Act. The suit was dismissed on December 16, 1986; however, this decision has been appealed.

Combined Laboratory and X-Ray Technicians

The Committee for Combined Laboratory and X-Ray Technicians, which was established in

August, 1985, presented draft regulations to the Health Disciplines Board on June 3, 1986.

The Board, on reviewing these regulations, determined that they should be circulated to the various groups and agencies that have an interest in this discipline. By the end of 1986 the Board had received extensive comments. The Board and the Committee will be consulting further with stakeholders in 1987 with a view to finalizing the regulations later in the year.

Psychiatric Nurses

In anticipation of possible designation under the Health Disciplines Act, the Psychiatric Nurses Association of Alberta, began drafting regulations for psychiatric nurses early in 1986. In November, 1986, the Health Disciplines Board reviewed the draft regulations and determined that these regulations could now be circulated for comment. The Health Disciplines Board and the Psychiatric Nurses Association of Alberta will be reviewing these comments in 1987.

Hearing Aid Practitioners

The Alberta Hearing Aid Practitioners Association prepared draft regulations for the discipline of hearing aid practitioner. These regulations were reviewed on two occasions by the Health Disciplines Board in 1986; first in June and then in November. In November, the Board determined that these regulations could now be circulated to the various groups and agencies that have an interest in the practice of this discipline. The Association and the Health Disciplines Board will be reviewing these comments in 1987.

Rehabilitation Practitioners

In 1986, the Health Disciplines Board and the Rehabilitation Practitioner Committee continued the task of drafting regulations for rehabilitation practitioners. In drafting these regulations, it became apparent that establishing regulations for rehabilitation practitioners would have a far reaching impact upon the provision of rehabilitation services. In order to better assess the extent of this impact, a private consultant was commissioned to conduct an investigation to evaluate the impact of regulating this discipline. While this study was being conducted the activity of the Rehabilitation Practitioner Committee was suspended.

The consultant will be presenting his report to the Minister in 1987.

Acupuncturists

During 1986, the Health Discipline Board and the Acupuncture Committee continued the process of developing regulations for this discipline.

Emergency Medical Technicians

Regulations

The emergency medical technician regulation under the Health Disciplines Act came into force on December 31, 1985. This regulation provided for the registration of emergency medical technicians - ambulance and emergency medical technicians - paramedic. The former provide basic life support services and the latter provide advanced life support services.

During 1986 the Health Disciplines Board and the Emergency Medical Technician Committee focussed primarily upon the establishment of the register for emergency medical technicians.

The members of the Emergency Medical Technicians Committee for 1986 were:

Dan Osborne, Red Deer - Chairman
Mary Ann Chernuka, Eckville
William Coghill, Edmonton (resigned)
Joe Heaton, Medicine Hat
Joyce Holt, Spruce Grove
Paul Morck, Calgary
(appointed April, 1986)
Daniel Reid, Peace River
Terry Sosnowski, M.D., Edmonton
(resigned)
Richard White, St. Albert (resigned)
Brian Winter, Cochrane
(appointed July, 1986)

Registration Report

In 1986, the first registry for emergency medical technicians was established. Individuals were eligible to have their names entered into the register if they had received appropriate training, had written the approved examination, were current in the practice of the discipline, and had completed the approved forms.

In 1986, there were 877 EMT-A and 365 EMT-P applications for registrations. Of these, 785 EMT-A's and 342 EMT-P's were ultimately registered.

The Registrar referred 19 EMT-A and 11 EMT-P applications to the Emergency Medical Technician Committee for assessment. The Committee's disposition of these referrals is shown in Table 1.

Of the EMT-P applications rejected by the Committee, three were appealed to the Health Disciplines Board. One appeal was upheld and two were referred back to the Committee for further consideration. The Committee ultimately determined that these two individuals would be eligible for registration upon the completion of supplementary training and the registration examination. In Table 1 these two cases are included in the category "conditions imposed".

TABLE 1

Review of Applications for Registration: Emergency Medical Technicians

Disposition	EMT-A	EMT-P
Approved[1]	8	2
Conditions[2] Imposed	3	7
Rejected[3]	5	2[4]
Awaiting further Information	3	0
Total	19	11

[1]If applicants had not done so, they were required to write the registration examination.

[2]Conditions include refresher programs, supervised practicums, or other supplementary study.

[3]Applicants would have to complete an entire approved program to be eligible for registration.

[4]In one case the Committee's decision was overturned on appeal.

Approval of Programs and Examinations

According to the regulations for Emergency Medical Technicians, applicants for registration must have completed a program that has been approved by the Health Disciplines Board or a program that is substantially equivalent.

On the Committee's recommendation, the Health Disciplines Board approved three programs for emergency medical technicians - paramedic (two in Alberta and one in British Columbia) and thirteen programs for Emergency Medical Technicians - Ambulance, (five in Alberta and nine in other provinces or in the United States). The relatively larger number of approved programs for Emergency Medical Technicians - Ambulance, reflects the fact that:

- many provinces do not provide training at the EMT-P level; and
- programs that are approved at the Paramedic level are also approved for registration at the EMT-A level.

The regulations also require applicants to have completed a registration examination approved by the Health Disciplines Board.

For Emergency Medical Technicians - Paramedic, the approved registration examination, is the registration examination provided by the Registered Emergency Paramedic Association of Alberta. For Emergency Medical Technicians -Ambulance, a specific registration examination has not yet been developed. In the interim, the final examination to the programs offered in Alberta, have been approved as Emergency Medical Technician registration examinations. Graduates of programs outside of Alberta are required to write one of these examinations as a condition of registration.

A registration examination for Emergency Medical Technicians - Ambulance is in the process of being developed. When that examination is approved by the Health Disciplines Board, all new applicants for registration as Emergency Medical Technicians - Ambulance will be required to write that examination as a registration exam. At that time the final examinations to the Alberta programs will cease to be approved as registration examinations.

Medical Radiation Technologists Regulations

The Regulation for medical radiation technologists came into effect on January 31, 1986. This regulation provides for the registration of radiographic technologists, nuclear-medicine technologists, and radiation oncology technologists. The past year has, therefore, been devoted primarily to the establishment of a register for this discipline.

In 1986, the members of the Medical Radiation Technologist Committee were:

Mr. Ian Fleming, Edmonton, Chairman
Mr. Larry Curtis, Calgary
Ms. Diana Girouard, Edmonton
Mr. Cam McKay, Calgary
Dr. Larry Playfair, Red Deer
Mr. Gerard Vanhooren, Red Deer

Registration Report

In 1986, the Registrar of Health Disciplines received 1,025 radiographic technologist, 71 oncology technologist and 83 nuclear medicine technologist applications for registration. At present there are 973 radiographic, 66 radiation oncology, and 77 nuclear medicine technologists registered under the Act.

During the year, the Registrar referred 21 radiographic technologist applications for registration to the Committee. The Committee's disposition of these is outlined below:

Approve[1]	12
Approve with Conditions[2]	7
Reject	1
Further Information	1

No applications for registration as a nuclear medicine or radiation oncology technologist were referred to the Committee.

Approval of Programs and Examinations

In order to be registered as a medical radiation technologist, an applicant must have completed a program of studies approved by the Board or a program that is substantially equivalent. In 1986 the Health Disciplines Board, on the recommendation of the Committee, approved training programs in all three areas of practice. In all three cases, the Board approved the programs offered in Alberta and all other Canadian programs that had been accredited by the Canadian Medical Association/Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists.

In order to be eligible for registration, a practitioner must successfully pass a registration examination. In all three areas of practice the approved registration examinations are the National Examinations in Medical Radiation Technology offered by the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists.

[1]Some applicants may be required to sit the registration examination. In this case, they receive temporary registration in accordance with the regulation.

[2]Conditions include supplementary training or refresher programs.

Respiratory Therapists

Regulations

The regulation for respiratory therapists came into force on March 31, 1986. During 1986, the establishment of the register, was the main concern of the Committee and the Board with respect to this discipline. In 1986, the members of the Respiratory Therapist Committee were:

Ms. Mary Rehill, Edmonton, Chairman
Ms. Marlene Irwin, Edmonton
Mr. Albert J. Maiani, Calgary
Mr. Keith Wilson, Edmonton
Dr. Dan Stollery, Edmonton
(appointed November, 1986)

Registration Report

In 1986, there were 444 applications for registration. To date, 424 individuals have been registered. During the year 7 applications were referred by the Registrar to the Respiratory Therapy Committee. Of these the Committee approved two and required the remainder to complete a refresher program.

Approval of Programs and Examinations

The regulation for respiratory therapists requires that applicants for registration complete a program of studies that is approved by the Board or that is equivalent to such a program. The Health Disciplines Board, on the recommendation of the Committee, approved the two programs offered in Alberta plus all other Canadian respiratory therapy programs that had been accredited by the Canadian Medical Association/Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists.

In addition to completing an approved program, all applicants must complete an approved registration examination. For respiratory therapists, the approved examination is the certification examination offered by the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists.